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CHALLENGE



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Rulers' War on Terror Hits Unemployed

The U.S. bosses' "war on terror" is taking a toll on the unemployed. On Dec. 28, 800,000 laid-off workers had their jobless benefits cut off. Additionally Congress did absolutely nothing for another million who had already exhausted their extended emergency benefits. In effect, the racist rulers are paying hundreds of billions to wage imperialist war worldwide, in part, on the backs of the unemployed.

Still worse, 11 million of the 18 million unemployed are completely INeligible for any benefits at all, ever. This 38% eligibility rate is the lowest in the Western industrial world.

Racist unemployment means that black workers suffer twice the unemployment rate of white workers, and working for lower wages collect even smaller unemployment checks. "Last hired, first fired" continues to produce super-profits for the bosses. It leads to double rates of poverty, slum housing, infant mortality and more. Racist unemployment depresses conditions for ALL workers, as many "layoff-proof" white workers at Verizon are discovering.

Unemployment is built into capitalism. In its 500-year history, the profit system has NEVER produced full employment. All bosses are driven to beat their competitors and cut costs by laying off workers, especially in an economic crisis.

The U.S. Congress is saturated with millionaire representatives of the U.S. ruling class who couldn't care less about the suffering of jobless workers and their families.

Republicans and Democrats went home at the end of 2002 without passing even any stopgap measure to help unemployed workers who had exhausted their benefits. Blaming each other, both want to gain political advantage in next year's elections. One proposal would bar any extension of benefits in 24 states where the "official" (artificially low) unemployment rate is



below 6% — as if a laid-off worker in one state doesn't need benefits as much as one in another.

The Senate bill co-authored by NY Democrat Hillary Clinton and Oklahoma Republican Don Nickles would cost \$5 billion and would only extend payments for 13 weeks for those who exhausted previous benefits, and would do nothing for the 11 million who are "ineligible."

The "war on terror" in Afghanistan is costing a billion dollars a month and has already cost \$15 billion. The war plans for Iraq will cost between \$200 billion and over \$1.4 trillion if U.S. rulers occupy the oil fields for 10 years. The cost of maintaining the U.S. naval armada in the oil-rich Persian Gulf for one year - \$50 billion - could take care of ALL 18 million unemployed in the U.S. at \$300 a week for six months. But that's not the way capitalism works.

As Marx pointed out, capitalism requires a "reserve army of the unemployed" to drive down the wages of those still working. The only reason any unemployment insurance exists at all is because communists led millions of workers in the streets during the Great Depression of the 1930s, and forced U.S. rulers to fork over a tiny portion of the billions they steal from the working class. Communist revolution will eliminate unemployment. There will be a shortage of workers, not jobs, as we all work to produce as much as possible for the needs of the international working class.✱

Control of Iraqi Oil Crucial to U.S. BOSSES' PLAN TO RULE WORLD

U.S. rulers have assembled the greatest, most destructive arsenal in world history. Since the middle of the Twentieth Century, from Hiroshima to Korea to Vietnam to Latin America, Africa and Kosovo, their bullets, bombs — including nuclear devices — and economic terrorism have far eclipsed Hitler in the murder of workers and children.

Now they are ready to unleash military havoc against the working class of Iraq in a gamble to dominate the world for the foreseeable future. This is the nature of capitalism — the profit system.

The butchery of imperialist war reveals the nature of capitalism to masses of workers, students and soldiers. During the Vietnam war, when the U.S. military slaughtered over three million people, rebellions were a daily occurrence — from Paris to Detroit to Mexico City to the GIs who "fragg" (killed) their own officers in Vietnam. Imperialist war opens the

door to win many to PLP's communist politics of turning the war into a mass revolutionary struggle to sweep away the warmakers — from the battlefronts to the factories, from schools to neighborhoods, from Washington to Baghdad.

The coming war isn't about "weapons of mass destruction (WMD)." Saddam has fewer WMD's now than he did when the 1991 Gulf War began. The U.S. supplied him with much of the chemical and biological weapons he does possess, for use during the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s, when U.S. policymakers considered Iran their greatest threat in the Persian Gulf.

The "weapons inspections" are a hypocritical ploy designed to give Bush an excuse to launch a war that U.S. bosses consider a strategic necessity. At the heart of the matter lies the vast treasure of Iraqi oil — proven reserves of 112 billion barrels, second largest in

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U.S. Bosses Plan to Rule World

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the world after Saudi Arabia. In addition, “as many as 220 billion barrels of resources are deemed probable.” (“Guiding Principles for U.S. Post-Conflict Policy in Iraq,” Council on Foreign Relations/Baker Institute for Public Policy, p. 18)

For modern capitalism, oil is not just another commodity. It is the lifeline to economic and political power, fueling the factories, the transportation systems and the engines of war. It remains crucial to the production of everything from pharmaceuticals to computer chips. Whoever controls the cheapest, most abundant supplies, can wield extraordinary power over its rivals.

For the U.S. ruling class, world domination is a matter of necessity,

flowing from the character of the profit system. As Marx and Engels, the founders of scientific communism, understood 150 years ago, the capitalists require maximum profit.

Imperialism generates bloody capitalist rivalries while it impoverishes and slaughters the workers of the world. As Lenin wrote 100 years ago, this leads to an insatiable drive to invest abroad, to find larger pools of cheap labor, new markets and access to raw materials. U.S. bosses' competitors also clamor for maximum profits. This inter-imperialist rivalry inevitably leads to war. War in Iraq will drag us further into the bloodiest stage of imperialism in world history.

The international working class has a long, hard fight ahead. Over the next decade or so, U.S. bosses are likely to occupy the entire Persian

Gulf. Their Chinese, European and Russian rivals will not sit still forever and hand them a free pass, as they are forced to do today. Over the long haul, another world war is in the cards, most likely between an isolated U.S. and a coalition of its foes.

This is merely the harsh truth of imperialism and the laws that govern it. But we don't have to accept this monstrous future. Communist revolution offers the one alternative to imperialist war. Despite the reversals of the first communist revolutions, history shows that communist parties can lead masses of workers and soldiers in opposing armies to



turn imperialist war into its opposite. World War I produced the Russian Revolution. The Chinese Revolution was born out of World War II.

By building a mass communist movement, across all borders, out of each imperialist adventure, our revolutionary forces can grow stronger and ultimately make the next world war their last! ✪

SADDAM IS NO ‘LESSER EVIL!’

Many in the liberal and phony “leftist” leadership of the anti-war movement spread the dangerous illusion that nationalists like Saddam Hussein “are not as bad as Bush.” Make no mistake, Saddam is cut from the same cloth. We do the Iraqi workers no favors by supporting him. “The enemy of my enemy is NOT my friend.”

U.S. sanctions have cut Iraq’s oil income by two-thirds. But Saddam & Co. have made sure that the available money goes to the rich. In Baghdad’s wealthy districts, you can find a brand new \$42,000 Landcruiser, a top-of-the-line Mercedes Benz for \$72,000, \$2,500 U.S.-made refrigerators, Armani suits and Sony digital TVs.

While two million poor in the “Saddam City” part of Baghdad are “serviced” by one hospital that is falling apart. Saddam and his elite have an underused hospital better equipped than most in the U.S. While Iraqi government workers average less than \$50 a month, soldiers make \$15 a month and army pensioners live on \$4 a month, Saddam’s eldest son drives a new \$200,000 Rolls-Royce Corniche. The Iraqi capitalists

share the responsibility with U.S. imperialism for the deaths of 500,000 children from starvation and disease.

The U.S. helped install Saddam in power in the early 1960s when the CIA collaborated with Hussein’s Ba’athist Party in a coup that overthrew Abdel Karim Kassem. The latter was seen as “too friendly with the

professors, teachers, doctors and others....Pregnant women and old men...were tortured to death in the presence of their children. Saddam Hussein, who had rushed back from exile in Cairo to join the victors, was personally involved in the torture of leftists....The eliminations were done mainly on...house-to-house visits by

are branded on the forehead and receive long prison terms. Saddam gassed thousands of innocent Kurdish civilians to death with the support of, and materials supplied by, U.S. rulers. Workers have every reason to hate both Saddam and Bush!

Saddam’s crimes cannot be overlooked because he is at odds with U.S. imperialism. He is no “lesser evil.” We should have no illusions about various nationalist bosses around the world who want to use the masses’ hatred for U.S. imperialism to strengthen their own hand. The most dangerous enemies of the working class are those who mislead and divert us from communist revolution.

Some say war in Iraq may cause further instability throughout the Middle East. There is nothing good about the stability of capitalist rule. Capitalism is in a permanent state of war worldwide. The only way out of this hell on earth is to organize Iraqi, U.S., British and all workers, soldiers and students to destroy the cause of modern war; capitalism.✪

“The U.S. helped install Saddam in power in the early 1960s when the CIA collaborated with Hussein’s Ba’athist Party in a coup that overthrew Abdel Karim Kassem. The latter was seen as ‘too friendly with the Soviets and the Iraqi Communist Party.’ Then the Ba’athists murdered thousands of leftists, using lists provided by the CIA.”

Soviets and the Iraqi Communist Party.” Then the Ba’athists murdered thousands of leftists, using lists provided by the CIA. Said Arburish’s book, *A Brutal Friendship*, describes Saddam’s rule:

“There were many ordinary people who were eliminated because they continued to resist...but there were also senior army officers, lawyers,

hit squads who knew where their victims were and carried out on-the-spot executions. This explains the killing of seven of the 13-man Central Committee of the Iraqi Communist Party — most after they were hideously tortured.”

Iraqi newspapers regularly report people’s tongues being cut out for criticizing Saddam. Army deserters

WHAT WE FIGHT FOR:

- ✪PLP fights to smash capitalism wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim communism is dead, capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world. The Soviet Union and China returned to capitalism because socialism maintained too many aspects of capitalism, like wages and divisions of labor.
- ✪Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism. This fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.
- ✪Communism means working collectively to build a society based on need. We will abolish work for wages,

money and profit. Everyone will share society’s benefits and burdens.

- ✪Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.
- ✪Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women workers.
- ✪Communism means abolishing nations which leads to nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.
- ✪Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers, eventually everyone must become communist organizers.

JOIN US!

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Opposition Building vs. Fascist Round-Up of Immigrants

Three thousand angry demonstrators protested the arrests of possibly 700 nationals from Iran and other Middle Eastern countries in Southern California last month. The men, some as young as 16, had voluntarily appeared at Immigration Service (INS) offices under a new law requiring nationals from those countries — visitors and those with visas — to register and be finger-printed. They were jailed for days, packed 30 to 40 in a cell, left without food sleeping on the floor, denied access to family or lawyers, and moved out of state because of overwhelming overcrowding. In Denver six students were imprisoned for failing to take enough classes as required by their student visas. Like the California detainees, they're not suspected of any crimes or links to terrorist groups.

Outrage is spreading among Muslim, Arab and South Asian communities in New York and New Jersey where registration is set to begin. Pakistanis — now added to the list of those required to report — form the largest group: 223,500 nationally, 16,000 in N.J. and 51,000 in N.Y.

In Pakistani areas of Brooklyn and Queens, protesters from the local

communities turned out in significant numbers. Cab drivers, construction, office and restaurant workers have been living in fear there since 9/11. Hundreds have been arrested, jailed for months and deported. But fear is giving way to anger. Although the numbers are small, the fact that they appeared in public at all was an advance.

Weekly demonstrations have begun at the Manhattan INS office. A mass mobilization is planned for Jan. 10.

Campaigns challenging the laws are being organized. Some detainees have been released, some laws voided. Primarily the movement against the round-ups and the registrations aims at stopping the injustices. But a single-issue struggle without an anti-capitalist class perspective will not build a mass movement that can challenge the system. Leaders and masses alike have illusions they can reform the system with

pressure on politicians and through the courts.

There have been attempts to unite with black, Latin and Asian groups, based on the common thread of racism, but without seeing the key role racism plays in capitalism. More positively, Jewish people and Japanese-Americans have become

involved. At demonstrations, slogans like, "What's next? Concentration camps?" recognize that a fascist state is developing, although the word fascism is not used. Nor does the movement link fascism to war.

Blanket obligatory registering and finger-printing of workers and students because of their national origin is a qualitative step in the steady rise of fascism. It parallels events in Nazi Germany when Hitler started with the Jews, seized in their homes and arrested. Then came the trade unionists, communists and anyone oppos-

ing fascist terror. Nazi scapegoating of Jews for all Germany's problems resembles what is happening to Arabs, Muslims and South Asians today. Workers in Nazi Germany lost any rights; living standards fell as money went to war preparations; and then world war ensued, killing tens of millions.

The U.S. today mirrors that era: arrests without warrants of Arabs, Muslims and South Asians; their imprisonment without access to lawyers and family; secret courts; lawyers stopped from boarding planes; workers threatened with jail for striking (the West Coast dockworkers); and now the enforced registration of hundreds of thousands.

When the Nazis rounded up Jews, too few Germans opposed it. We must learn from that. The struggle to stop the arrests and deportations of our South Asian, Arab and Muslim brothers is the front line of the fight against fascism today — and since the rulers need this police state apparatus to prevent opposition to war, this struggle must be linked to the fight against imperialist war with Iraq and other wars to follow.☸

"When the Nazis rounded up Jews, too few Germans opposed it. We must learn from that. "

Never Again? It's Starting Here!

When the Department of Justice ordered all male non-citizen immigrants above 16 from certain Muslim Middle Eastern and African countries to register and be interrogated by the Immigration Service (INS), our club first heard about it from a friend. He had seen a flyer put out by the International Student Affairs Office on his campus. Students there met and held a rally to denounce the "special registration" as racist and fascist.

We quickly distributed a leaflet on several campuses and it helped build anti-fascist ideas among our friends. It compared the INS move to the Nazis requiring Jews to wear stars on their clothing. It linked the anti-immigrant attacks to the impending war to control Iraq's oil as well as to layoffs and the current cuts in health care. We urged students, workers and soldiers to refuse to let the bosses murder and imprison our class brothers and sisters in order to solve their own crisis and said the working class needs communist revolution.

One comrade took the fight to a class on War and Diplomacy. The teacher was discussing the lessons of World War II, saying the holocaust was a test of our "humanity." He said unfortunately we failed that test because not enough was done to prevent the racist mass murder of Jews, communists and others. Our comrade raised his hand to say we were facing that very

same test today with the INS forcing Arabs to register. He paralleled the development of U.S. fascism to its rise in Nazi Germany.

One student responded angrily that it was "insulting" to compare the U.S. to Nazi Germany. He claimed it was O.K. to force non-citizens to register. Another student countered that whether or not people are citizens, this special registration was racist. When the class ended, the comrade distributed many of the leaflets.

Another comrade was invited to a demonstration some local college friends had called against the war on Iraq. When passing out the leaflet, he was asked to take the mike to describe the racist INS detentions. He linked them to the war on Iraq. These same friends later invited us to a demonstration they called on both the detentions and the war. It was small but very spirited. We gave political leadership. We've attended many other demonstrations with *CHALLENGES* and leaflets. In many of them, the leadership has refused to discuss the relationship of the oil war to the war on immigrants.

Ultimately the communist PLP told the truth: that war and fascism are the ruling class's only alternative in a capitalist crisis, and that, in the long run, the capitalist beast has to be destroyed with communist revolution.☸

Multi-racial Unity Fights Deportations

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 6 — The day after the arrest of up to 700 Middle Eastern immigrants here several thousand people held an angry protest. Last Saturday, hundreds demonstrated at INS headquarters. Reflecting its multinational, international character, the group chanted, "Arab, Asian, black, Latin, white — against deportations we must unite." A lawyer said he couldn't tell his clients to register, knowing it was a "set-up." Others called for "fair registrations" to "protect immigrants," but this will only insure passivity in the face of fascism. Another speaker denounced the coming war in

Iraq. A PLP leaflet was well received.

The INS threatens to register *all* immigrants, including those from Latin America and Asia, who form a much larger group than the 400,000 Iranians. Immigrant workers are a key part of the California economy. The rulers will use selective deportations to intimidate these historically militant workers while keeping the rest to super-exploit.

They want citizens to remain passive as Middle Eastern immigrants are harassed and deported, sending a message to all workers: don't fight back or strike against imperialist war, racist cutbacks or fascism.☸

Racist Cuts Kill Babies

NEW YORK CITY, Jan. 3 — "Central Harlem's infant mortality rate rose to 13.1 deaths per 1000 births last year — more than double the city-wide level....Advocates and health care experts blamed the Harlem rate...on delays in getting funds and a large influx of immigrants who don't have ready access to health care." (*New York Post*, 12/30/02).

Racism is the real culprit. This city's capitalist-created budget crisis feeds Wall Street banks and bondholders over \$3 billions in debt payments annually while social programs are slashed. "The city Health Department's Sandra Mullin acknowledged the delay in funds, saying, "We are in the midst of a budget crisis....The scopes and budget had to be worked out..." (*NYP*)

Anti-immigrant racism is another cause. "In Central Harlem, there are a lot of immigrants from Africa," explained Adam Aponte, chief of pediatrics at North General Hospital. Lack of health insurance and fear of immigration authorities distance these workers from health care.

Meanwhile, in Argentina in the Southern Cone of the Hemisphere, children are dying of malnutrition for the first time in modern history. On Dec. 29, Juan Manuel became the 18th child in the northern province of Tucuman to die of malnutrition in the last 60 days. Dr. Luis Albaca, who cared for Juan, said, "He was an innocent victim of poverty and the horrible policies of the national government....In Simoca [site of the death]....the rate of malnutrition and infant mortality is similar to that...in Africa and areas of India. The sad part is that nothing is done to counter this." (*Pagina12*, 12/30/02).

By year's end, two more Argentine children died of malnutrition in Chaco province. Thousands of children are suffering hunger throughout this country, one of the world's leading producers of meat and wheat.

Capitalism has been a failure for billions worldwide, particularly for workers' children. For their sake, let's organize to fight for a society where the wealth workers produce will be shared according to need. Children will be the first priority, eliminating the profit system and its bankers and agro-industry bosses.☸

Union Leaders: Capitalist Tool

At a recent union meeting, some UAW members were discussing Trent Lott’s public support of segregation that cost him his leadership role in the Republican Party. One black woman said, “I’m not afraid of Trent Lott. I know where he stands. It’s the enemy I can’t see that worries me.”

That, in a nutshell, describes the liberal and “socialist” union leaders and politicians, who out of patriotism and loyalty to the profit system *inevitably* lead the workers to fascism and war. Prior to World War II, with fascism on the rise around the world, the revolutionary communist movement (the 3rd International) referred to these “social democratic” union leaders as “social fascists.” This is still true. Today, U.S. rulers are using the union leaders to get workers to support and pay hundreds of billions of dollars for the imperialist “War on Terror,” war in Iraq and fascist “Homeland Defense.”

Operating within the (bosses’) laws of capitalism, fighting to defend “your” boss against the “foreign” competition and trying to bail the bosses out of their unending crises leads workers into the arms of the ruling class. “Union representatives on the board [of Directors] help the companies run. They are like management.” So says the head of the U. of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School of Business’s Center for Human Resources (*New York Times*, 12/26/02), commenting on the workers’ “ownership” of United Airlines.

At United Airlines, union leaders negotiated a powerless “employee stock ownership plan [that “gave”] workers a 55% stake in the company,” in exchange for huge concessions. Now the stock is virtually worthless and the company has filed for bankruptcy. United is demanding \$2.4 billion in immediate wage cuts, laying off thousands and threatening to void their union contracts.

Bankrupt USAIR gave the union

three seats on the board of directors to secure \$840 million in concessions. An airline spokesman said, “They will have representation...but certainly not control.” (*NYT*) Those labor seats on the Board “helped USAirways secure the concessions.”

Northwest Airlines has had three union representatives on its Board since 1993. Northwest’s president says, “Our labor directors...are fully aware of the...obligations they have.” Translation: they know which side their bread is buttered on.

Verizon is laying off thousands of workers, and the best the Communications Workers of America leadership can do is to spend millions on patriotic media ads citing the workers’ role in repairing phone damage caused by 9/11. Mobilizing workers for an all-out strike was never a thought.

At the conclusion of contract talks between the TWU and the “poverty”-pleading MTA, the new “militant” Local 100 President Toussaint sealed the biggest sellout of NYC transit workers in recent history by hugging the MTA boss. Toussaint relied on Hillary Clinton, Basil Paterson and other Democratic Party hacks, as well as union sellouts like the teachers union’s Randi Weingarten and even the heads of the racist Police Benevolent Association to push the MTA to make a deal and avoid a strike. The union agreed to a wage freeze in the first year and surrendered a no-lay-off clause. (See article below)

TWU’s Toussaint promised the workers militant, class struggle. Once in the saddle, he served the bosses better than the Old Guard he defeated. In a union with an overwhelming majority of black and Latino workers, he was just as guilty of enforcing the MTA’s racism, which keeps these workers’ conditions below those of the white workers on other MTA suburban lines. If white workers fail to unite with their black

and Latin brothers and sisters, they too will fall victim to the bosses’ racist attacks. That’s what thousands of white Verizon workers are discovering. Racism oppresses ALL workers and paves the way for fascism.

The bosses need the union leaders more than ever in an era of intensifying fascism and war. These traitors have turned what is supposed to be a defensive weapon of workers into a tool of the capitalists. Nazi Germany had its Labor Front, which used its lieutenants to betray the workers. Mussolini had his fascist Corporate State, which “united” workers with bosses to serve the big capitalists. And Roosevelt was temporarily stopped from moving in that direction by the communist-led resistance of millions of workers during the crisis of the 1930s. Despite organizing millions of industrial workers into unions, win-

ning the 8-hour day, unemployment insurance and Social Security, the communist movement succumbed to nationalism, abandoned revolution and was purged from the unions by the Cold War anti-communist onslaught. For at least 60 years the U.S. labor movement has been led by those most loyal to U.S. imperialism, whose hands are drenched in workers’ blood.

PLP struggles against the bosses’ attacks in order to provide workers with a school for communism. Capitalism can survive any economic crisis, any imperialist war. But it can’t survive communist revolution. Only such a revolution can seize state power from the ruling class and the social fascist union leaders who defend their drive to fascism and war.☸

CEO’s? No, Just Their Lieutenants

The following are the salaries paid to various union presidents in 2001:

Jay Mazur (garment workers).....	\$498,554
Duane Worth (airline pilots).....	439,296
John Bowers (East coast longshoremen).....	358,554
Sandra Feldman (teachers).....	354,105
Doug McCarron (carpenters).....	336,745
Doug Dority (Food & Commercial).....	305,032
Gerald McEntee (AFSCME).....	281,634
John Wilhelm (hotel workers).....	273,120
Michael Monroe (painters).....	258,500

[Source: *Wall Street Journal*, 12/24/02]

‘Roger the Dodger’ Taking Transit Workers for A Ride

The new transit contract is a big victory for Wall Street and the NYC Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA). The precedent-setting first-year wage freeze perpetuates the myth that these billionaires are “broke” and that workers must sacrifice.

Much of the \$1,000 lump-sum payment will be lost to taxes, and is excluded from a worker’s base pay, negatively affecting vacation, sick time and future increases. The 3% raises for the second and third years barely match inflation. The MTA can now consolidate various transit lines into a Regional Bus Company, meaning layoffs and attacks on seniority and civil service status. Transit Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 leaders agreed to increase productivity and “relax” work rules that workers fought and died to establish. This means

more speed-up, less safety precautions, working out of title and more accidents, like the two workers killed last November because the MTA routinely disregards work-rules. The TWU dropped its demand to end Workfare, allowing unemployed workers on welfare to continue doing union work at slave labor pay.

When TWU president ‘Roger the Dodger’ campaigned for office, he opposed most of these concessions that he is now urging workers to vote “Yes” on.

But the effects of this rotten contract will ripple far beyond transit workers. About 200,000 city workers are facing contract talks and now a wage freeze. Over 7.2 million daily riders will pay more because the TWU leadership dropped its demand for no-fare-increase. Hundreds of thou-

sands more will be hit with a commuter tax.

The union “leadership” could have exposed the City bosses’ “poverty” lies by publicizing the billions paid in interest to the banks, in bonuses to CEOs and in corporate stealing. Instead, they accepted the MTA’s “hard times” BS, despite last year’s \$300 million surplus and their refusal to open the books.

The “leadership” never mobilized for a strike, which Toussaint described as a “catastrophe.” Now transit workers are voting on the contract, but the militant rank and file, which overwhelmingly supported a strike at the Javits Center mass rally, is now unprepared to organize much resistance.

However, somewhat of a fight is occurring during the ratification

period. Toussaint is touring lockers urging a “yes” vote on the basis of safeguarding health benefits and the MTA’s “promise” to overhaul the hated disciplinary system, which still leaves 10,000 cases. The mail ballots will be counted on Jan 21.

PLP’s goal is to use this struggle as a school for transit workers to learn and organize for communist revolution. Capitalism feeds on wage slavery, war, racism and mass misery. The TWU’s own history shows that only by breaking the bosses’ laws have workers ever won anything of consequence, including the right to unionize. We fight for a communist society, where the working class rules and the wealth we create is distributed according to need.

A retired transit worker

WORKERS OF THE WORLD WRITE!

Colombian Union Hacks Dig Workers Graves

Capitalism survives because workers are disorganized and weak. Today Marx's call, "Workers of the world, unite!" has more validity than ever. Trade unions have never really carried this out — nor was that ever their purpose — and have dug our graves with their pro-boss collaborationism. As 2003 begins, workers worldwide urgently need an international revolutionary Party as PLP envisions one.

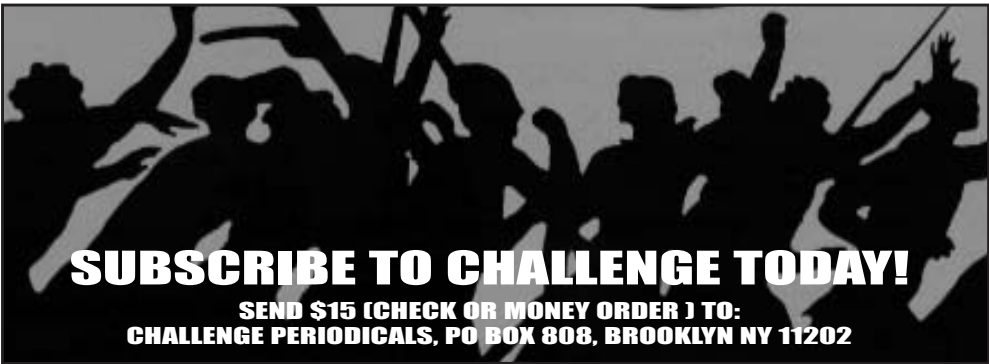
But capitalists well understand the need to neutralize organizations workers use to fight for their interests. Here in Colombia, under the misleadership of sellout union hacks, the percentage of unionized workers is a lowly 3%, A clear example is Sinal-trabavaria, which represents workers in the Bavaria brewery.

Several years ago, workers there waged a militant 72-day strike, despite attacks by the bosses, cops and death squads. This action put the bosses on the defensive for a while, but the union leadership did everything possible to help the bosses reverse that. They've signed an agreement giving up many of the gains won in decades of workers' battles. Now workers are demoralized and weakened.

Today, 2,000 Bavaria workers are out of work because they refused to accept this sellout. The 1,800 who accepted are at the mercy of the company and their union lieutenants. Now there are only 500 unionized workers at Bavaria, trying to hold onto what is left of 70 years of struggle.

But besides the bosses' drive for maximum profits and the sellout union executive committee, workers' lack of class consciousness is also a culprit. This deadly evil has made workers at Bavaria and worldwide easy targets of the bosses and their agents.

We in PLP have tried to counter this trend among Bavaria workers, to



bring our communist politics to the struggle. But the union leaders were in a better position to make workers bow to the bosses' pressures. However, all this — including our job losses — has made us see the need to double our efforts to bring our politics to the workers.

The circulation of *DESAFIO-CHALLENGE* inside the plants is crucial to this process. Our goal is still, workers of the world, unite to fight for a society without bosses and without union hacks: communism.

Red Worker

Heaven and Hell Are Right Here

For almost two years I've attended my friend's Presbyterian Church. I bring him *CHALLENGE* and other articles almost every Sunday, and try to bring him closer to a communist outlook. He, in turn, tries to bring me to Christianity.

The people in church are warm and friendly. They greet you with "The peace of the Lord be with you!" To those I know best, I reply "Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition!"

Many of our discussions come down to their idealist ideas versus our materialist ideas. They say, "You have to accept Jesus as your Savior if you want to go to heaven. Otherwise, you are going to hell!" But with mass starvation, and lack of decent health care, housing and jobs, for millions of workers worldwide, capitalism is truly hell.

Worker revolutions in Russia and China led to Socialism and reforms which were a step forward. Unfortunately, all that's been reversed, but providing lessons to be learned. A system based on communist principles will be an even greater step forward for the working class.

Church Red

Worth Every Nickel

Please find enclosed \$10 donation to be used for the advancement of the Cause. *CHALLENGE* is worth every nickel. Keep up the good work.

West Virginia prisoner

When Soldiers Fraternize, Bosses Lose

I appreciated the article in the last issue from the Chicago teachers. The debate in the union meeting and the struggle within the "Teachers Against the War" group, show we have a big opportunity to struggle with honest folks who don't agree with us on many things. The idea that we must trust the working class to see the big picture and not just put forward ideas most already agree with is a key point. Sometimes I censor myself instead of advancing ideas that will move a struggle to a higher level.

Activity among teachers has taken on greater importance because many working-class students will go into crucial industries or join the army, some immediately upon graduation

and more after several years of racist unemployment and/or dead-end jobs. What youth understand about the big picture can be crucial during a period of imperialist war. Youth who understand they are part of the international working class can fight for their class and not for the bosses, whether in a factory or on a battlefield.

Last month a documentary shown on the History Channel about the World War I Christmas Truce in 1914 revealed some possibilities. British and German soldiers stopped fighting and exchanged gifts, took photographs together and even played soccer. While the History Channel tried to portray this as "the Christmas Spirit" or "19th Century fair play," they had to admit that the soldiers in the trenches understood they had more in common with each other than they did with their own officers. But the History Channel won't admit that during World War I, communists especially in Russia - struggled with workers and soldiers to reject patriotism and nationalism and see themselves as one international working class, whose interests lie in fighting for power for our class. It was that perspective that inspired the Christmas Truce and led Russian soldiers in 1917 to leave the front and join with workers and peasants to make a revolution.

As both a U.S. and World History teacher, it's gratifying to see students draw useful lessons. The students in my U.S. History class had read about the pro-war government propaganda during World War I, as well as the jailing of anti-war activists and speakers. I asked the class why, in their opinion, people weren't told the truth about the war. In a class 70% Latino and 30% black, a young black woman answered, "Because there are more of us than there are of them."

A Teacher

RED EYE ON THE NEWS

BELOW ARE EXCERPTS FROM MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS THAT CONTAIN IMPORTANT INFORMATION:Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, WG=Weekly Guardian

Mid-East oil gets more vital

Washington, Dec. 25 — As President Bush seeks to reduce American reliance on oil imported from the Persian Gulf, new government studies predict that in two decades the West will be even more dependent on oil from Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern producers. [NYT, 12/26/02]

No Iraq answer can suit U.S.

Some scholars would say the task the world has assigned Iraq — to prove it has no weapons of mass destruction — is logically impossible....

The thing we're asking them to prove, whether you put it positively or negatively, is so extremely hard to prove that we're almost rigging the outcome by the way we put the question," said Laurence H. Tribe, the Harvard professor of constitutional law. [NYT, 12/15/02]

African women invade Chevron

ChevronTexaco...in the years ahead...will pump more of its oil in places where people live on "less than \$1 a day...."

The Nigerian....women's occupation of the Escravos Terminal set off three other women-led protests against

ChevronTexaco and one against Royal Dutch/Shell — the first time women spearheaded demonstrations against the Western oil giants....

"The Americans who claim to be freedom fighters, the Americans who claim to want to better mankind — for us they are the devil. They are worse than Lucifer. Can you tell me they are not worse than Saddam Hussein or Osama bin Laden? To me they are worse. I want to be clear. Americans are like terrorists to us. They come, take and leave without putting back.

"The only security is for them to improve the lot of the people. If they don't, Chevron is sitting on a powder keg." [NYT, 12/22/02]

Mass civilian deaths not news?

What are the likely human consequences of the impending war on Iraq? News media should be asking that question. But the American public remains in the dark....

The London-based Medact organization and International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War...warned:

"....Credible estimates of the total possible deaths on all sides during the conflict and the following three months range from 48,000 to over 260,000. Civil war within Iraq could

add another 20,000 deaths. Additional later deaths from post-war adverse health effects could reach 200,000."

And here's another conclusion from the report that major U.S. news outlets keep ignoring: "In all scenarios, the majority of casualties will be civilians." [Liberal Opinion Week, 12/16/02]

Dumas, descended from a slave, believed in armed struggle

The Dumas, those thoroughly French "giants..." were the son, grandson and great-grandson of an anonymous slave....A veil was long drawn over the fact that Alexander Dumas was descended from a black slave....The writer fired the imagination of generation after generation of readers with his tales of [The Three] musketeers, battles, fortresses and secret passages....Dumas suffered at the hands of racists....On November 30...the French republic was not just paying tribute to him, but repairing an injustice by admitting him to the Pantheon to rest side by side with Victor Hugo and Emile Zola....

But they were...different. Dumas was more physical. He was prepared to pick up a gun and attack a gunpowder factory in 1830, or join

Garibaldi's forces in 1860. [Le Monde, 12/1-2/02]

U.S. history overseas shows democracy is just rhetoric

Whenever it has exerted power overseas, America...values stability — which means not only political stability but also the steady, profitable flow of goods and raw materials — more than it values its own rhetoric about democracy. Where the two sides have collided, American power has come down heavily on the side of stability, for example, toppling democratically elected leaders from Mossadegh in Iran to Allende in Chile. Iraq is yet another test of this choice. Next door in Iran, from the 1950s to the 1970s, America backed stability over democracy, propping up the autocratic rule of the shah, only to reap the whirlwind of an Islamic fundamentalist revolution in 1979 that delivered neither stability nor real democracy. Does the same fate await an American operation in Iraq?....

If America takes on Iraq, it takes on the reordering of the whole region. It will have to stick at it through many successive administrations. The burden of empire is of long duration. [NYT, 1/5/03]

MLA Academics Open to Left Leadership

NEW YORK CITY, Dec. 31 — At the 2002 Convention of the Modern Language Association (MLA) here, many literary academics showed real openness to a leftist analysis of the current drive toward war and fascism, as well as of the brutal treatment of the non-tenure track faculty who teach about 60% of literature, language, and composition classes. Leaflets from both PLP (on communism as the solution to imperialist war) and the Radical Caucus (on inequalities in universities reflecting larger social inequalities) were warmly received.

Two of the three resolutions presented to the Delegate Assembly by the Radical Caucus were passed. One charged the University of California-Davis with abusing its non-tenure-track lecturers. The other (“guns versus butter”) called for funding education, not war. A third appealed to aca-

demics to analyze and condemn the use of language to rationalize war. It just missed receiving the ¾ vote needed to come to the floor.

The Delegate Assembly Organizing Committee (DAOC) tried to block resolutions with demands for “documentation.” This hypocrisy was exposed when they rejected the data presented to support the guns-versus-butter resolution. But the delegates followed the Radical Caucus’s lead, twice overruling the DAOC.

For Left politics, the Radical Caucus was the only show in town. Its meeting overflowed the small hotel room. While the Graduate Student Caucus previously had led struggles against the super-exploitation of adjunct and graduate student labor, it was virtually invisible here. The Radical Caucus is continuing this fight, connecting with the part-time and non-tenure-track teachers who are the most

class-conscious MLA members.

PLP members played a critical role at the convention, advancing Marxist class analyses of literary/cultural issues and the coming war. But we did not speak up boldly enough against red-baiting or defend the positive historical contributions of the world communist movement. Moreover, we presented fewer papers than in past, when we have emphasized topics like the centrality of communism to African-American literature, the bankruptcy of postmodernism and identity politics, the need to reject bourgeois notions of “literacy,” and the importance of teaching proletarian literature. At the 2003 convention we will rectify these errors. Furthermore, we need to be more consistent in unmasking the capitalist nature of universities as “ideology factories.” Many left-leaning academics persist



in viewing them as “centers of enlightenment” even as they engage in brutal employment practices.

PLP has contributed significantly to making Marxist perspectives respectable in the MLA. But we need to go beyond merely anti-capitalist politics — the basis of Radical Caucus unity — and win many left-leaning MLA members to support, and join, the PLP and the movement for communism.☸

2 Anti-coup Protestors Killed By Caracas Cops



CARACAS, Jan. 8—Two workers protesting against the rightwing “strikers” were killed by the Metropolitan police, controlled by the pro-coup mayor of Caracas. Workers from the poor neighborhoods all over Venezuela hate the pro “oil coup” forces, who are mostly racist and fascist. But unfortunately, these anti-coup workers believe that President Chavez, representing nationalist bosses, is the answer. Workers must break with all capitalist factions and build a revolutionary communist movement.

Untitled Response to War by Red MC

Lost life, a bit too hard to view,
especially through a focus too askewed,
who knew? Not me, not we, in fact not anyone,
well maybe some but only if their finger’s on the gun
trigger, bigger, bigger you feel as you start to kill,
but damn you opinions and right to free will,
“our lives, our fourtunes, and our sacred honor
for the sake of freedom” defend the dollar.
The most common cause for war I’ve ever seen,
is to help the rich keep on getting their green.
Currently oil is the imperialist prize,
or at least the focus in Exxon-Mobile’s eyes,
but will you, and I, and we, have to die,
to continue the constant Texas-T supply?
Well, yes. Because ain’t you heard they need recruits,
if their gonna have a war then they have to have troops,
to kill and be perishable as cannon-fodder,
so let’s raise our fists and not be head noddors,
to war without end, tear down the system from within,
we’ll turn the guns around and be found to win!
How can we, you us and me, fight back?

MARCHING WITH BLINDERS ON

SEATTLE, WA - On Jan. 14, thousands of angry education workers will descend upon the state capital in Olympia to rally and march against the devastating cutbacks already in place, and those about to come. We’ll let the governor and legislature know we’re furious at their refusal to give us a raise, despite voters having overwhelmingly approved one in the last election! We’ll tell them again that many of our students will be unable to pass the WASL (state mandated assessment test) because many teachers have left the state, or the profession altogether, due to low pay, large class size and tremendous mounds of paperwork.

All these issues are very important; it’s good that so many will participate. However, this demonstration is not addressing the most urgent matter workers, and especially students, are facing - the prospect of war in Iraq, which those cutbacks help pay for.

The very same students we teach and serve daily in our classrooms are confronted by a future of war, fascism, unemployment and racist violence. As educators and parents, we must unite with the youth who are increasingly taking to the streets to demonstrate against this imperialist war. For those students who are unaware, we must bring the issue to our classrooms. Our unions and associations are supporting Bush’s war for oil by remaining silent. If we go along with this we surely will be marching with blinders on!

At Olympia, we must raise the war amongst our fellow workers, students and parents and distribute literature on the buses and at the rally itself. We should win people to join us at anti-war rallies on Jan. 18. We have to raise it in our unions, associations, classrooms, churches, etc. With people we already know, we must take it even further and talk about the need to get rid of a system that sacrifices workers and working-class students so that a few crooks can control oil profits. We must overcome our own fears and step forward to lead these workers, students, soldiers and sailors to communist revolution!☸

Anti-War Students Expose U.S. Rulers’ Hypocrisy

About 700 students on a Northeastern campus of 6,000 participated in a two-day teach-in on the U.S. war in Iraq. The activity inspired formation of a student anti-war group which called for an anti-war action on December 10, as part of a National Day of Action. The students heading the new group also helped lead a student roundtable discussion and small discussion groups at the teach-in.

One young woman speaker challenged the audience by asking, “Why is the U.S. government suddenly so worried about the lives of these Iraqi people, when it has been slaughtering them at will?” She explained that the U.S. didn’t start a war when Hussein gassed his own people but now that the U.S. wants to control Iraqi oil, politicians are talking about being “concerned” for the very people the U.S. has been starving and bombing for ten years. She said that as far back as 1987, the U.S. funded Hussein with weapons to fight Iran because the U.S. didn’t like Iran’s policies.

Saying she attended the Oct. 26 march in Washington, D.C., against a war in Iraq because she wanted answers to her questions and was appalled to learn that U.S. military intervention is motivated by economic interests not humanitarian concerns and has caused millions of deaths of innocent people.

The student leadership here is important because until now, the faculty has been the main group leading activism against U.S. war plans abroad and repressive Homeland Security measures. More student-led events are needed to change students, just as the young woman above was transformed by the Oct. 26 march. Overcoming this pacifism will be even more important as the U.S. moves closer and closer towards war.☸